



Native American Experience

Overview

- Definitions
- Origins of Native Americans
- Beliefs and Values
- Historical events impacting Native Americans
- Contemporary Issues
- Contributions

Definition

As described in DoD Directive 1350.2, a Native American or Alaskan Native is a person having origins in the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition

Bureau of Indian Affairs Definition

- Be 1/4-1/2 Native American Blood at a minimum
- Live on or near trust lands/reservations
- Be on tribal roll recognized by the federal government
- Trace ancestry back three generations
- Be approved by Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) officials
- There are 500 federally recognized tribes which fit no single description and 250 different Indian languages

Origins of Native Americans

- Northeastern
 - Mostly fishers and hunters
- Southeastern
 - Farmers and hunters
- Southwest
 - Great Basin, Plateau: Farmers and sheep herders

Origins of Native Americans

- Plains
 - Farmers, fishers, and hunters
- California Coast
 - Primarily seed gatherers, e.g. berries, nuts,
 - and fishers
- Northwest Coast
 - Primarily fishers
- Subartic
 - Fishers, hunters

Population

- When Columbus arrived it is estimated there were between one and ten million Native Americans in America. By 1850 the population decreased to 250,000.
- The three primary causes of the decline:
 - Foreign Diseases
 - Starvation
 - Extermination
- Current populations estimates there are presently 2 million Native Americans growing to 4.3 million by 2050.

Beliefs and Values

- Differed significantly in some regards, yet very similar in others
- Respect of life and land
- Idea of inter-relatedness of all things
- Live in harmony with the environment

Religion

- Religion is everything to the Native American
- Earth viewed as the “Mother”
- The ‘Circle of Life’
- Hunting Philosophy
- One Superior Being

Role of the Family

- Elders are the most respected
- Children are more important than material things
- Women are very important to the tribe
- Though there are major differences, there are also similarities. Universal qualities like generosity, kindness, honor, courage, humor, and bravery.

Culture Values, Attitudes, and Behaviors

- Cooperation vs. Competition
- Reticence vs. Verbalization
- Group oriented vs. individualistic
- Role playing and observation
- Giving/sharing highly valued
- Time emphasis on present
- Values-teach importance without pressure

Legislation

- 400 treaties signed between government and Native Americans
- 1830 the Indian Removal act
- 1887, the Dawes Allotment Act
- Indian Citizenship Act, 1924
- Indian reorganization Act, 1934
- Johnson-O'Malley Act, 1934

Legislation

- Relocation Act, 1952
- House Concurrent Resolution 108, 1953
- Indian Education Act, 1972
- Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act, 1975
- Indian Child Welfare Act, 1978

Contemporary Social Issues

- Alcoholism
- Suicide

Contributions

- Food-42% of food eaten over the world derived from Native Americans
- Modern Warfare-Strategy and technique over technology
- Naming of North America- Over 200 English words were taken from native American languages
- Objects- Parkas, moccasins, spears
- Philosophy. Never give up, even against overwhelming odds
- Medicines- Over 60 Known medicines, such as aspirin

Contemporary Issues

- Gambling and gaming-4 billion a year
- Land/water rights
- Land claims
- Toxic/solid waste dumps
- Tribes taken on waste industries
- Self determination
- Mascots
- Religious freedom
- Native American activism

Key Native American Organizations

- American Indian Movement(AIM)
- National Congress of American Indians(NCAI)
- Native American Rights Funds(NARF)
- National Indian Youth Council(NIYC)
- Indian youth of America(IYA)

Native American in Armed Forces

- 17,00 registered for W.W.I, but only 8,000 inducted
- Beginning of W.W.II, 25,000 in the military
- PFC Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian, help raise the flag at Iwo Jima
- Marines Navajo Code Talkers, only code never deciphered by the enemy
- 41,500 served in Vietnam

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